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Spring Season

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THE chief aims of the Dublin Grand Opera Society are, firstly to provide the City of Dublin with performances of a high standard of excellence, and secondly, to foster native talent and to lay the foundations of a National School of Opera, which shall be truly evocative of the Irish Spirit.

Looking back on our activities during the ten years of our existence I feel we may claim to have made definite progress. Three years ago, with the first performance in Ireland of Debussy's "Pelleas et Melisande" by leading French singers from L'Opera Comique, Paris, we made musical history in this country. Since then we have had superb performances of Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' and 'Cosi fan tutte' by artists from the Hamburg State Opera, and also memorable interpretations of the principal roles in 'Tosca' by outstanding singers from the Royal Netherlands Opera Company. With the continued support of our Patrons and of the opera-loving public the Dublin Grand Opera Society will not cease in its efforts towards further progress.

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President, Dublin Grand Opera Society.

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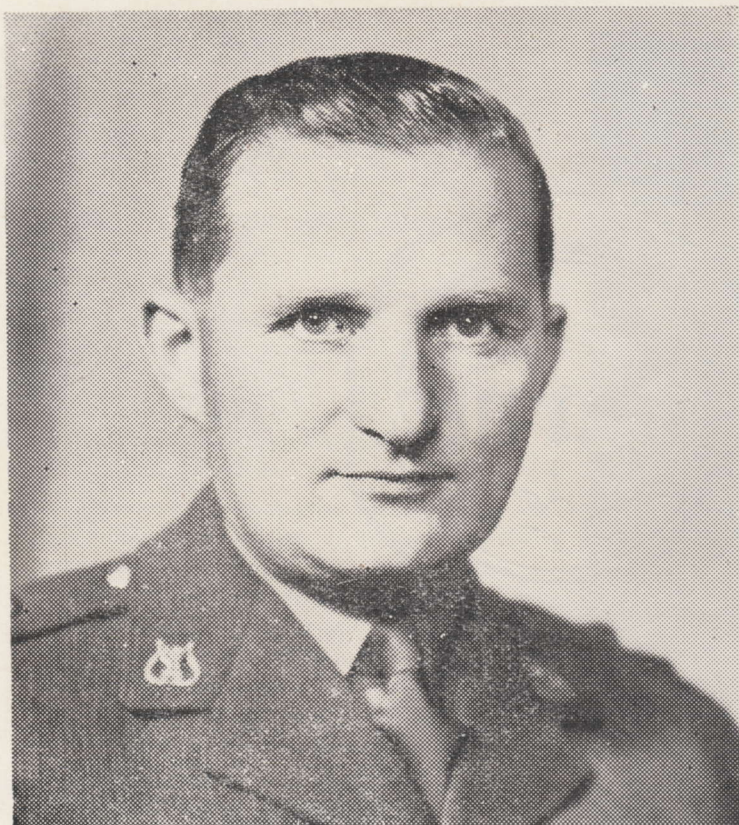


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*From
our
Musical
Director*

Lt. Col. J. M. Doyle, Mus.B., Musical Director, D.G.O.S.

WE are all very pleased to welcome once again the directorate and distinguished singers from Hamburg. The artistes who visited us last year created a most favourable impression and gave much enjoyment to Dublin opera goers. As a result of the co-operation of the Irish Broadcasting Service music lovers throughout Ireland were enabled to appreciate the excellent interpretations of "Cosi fan tutte" and "Don Giovanni" given in the original language in the Gaiety theatre and relayed by Radio Eireann.

I am particularly interested in, and looking forward to hearing "Seraglio" in the original text having had the pleasure a couple of years ago of conducting the successful revival of this charming work which the D.G.O.S. included in the repertoire of the Spring Season 1949.

I hope that at some not too far distant date we may hear and see these German singers, who specialize in Mozart, presenting the second part of Beaumarchais' comedy, the ever popular "Marriage of Figaro" which, although produced by Mozart thirty years earlier than the "Barbieri" is in its story and action a sequel to the events unfolded in Rossini's opera.

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1750

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Mahonys of Blarney

"The Battle of Words"

(DIESES LAERMEN WOHL BEDEUTEN)

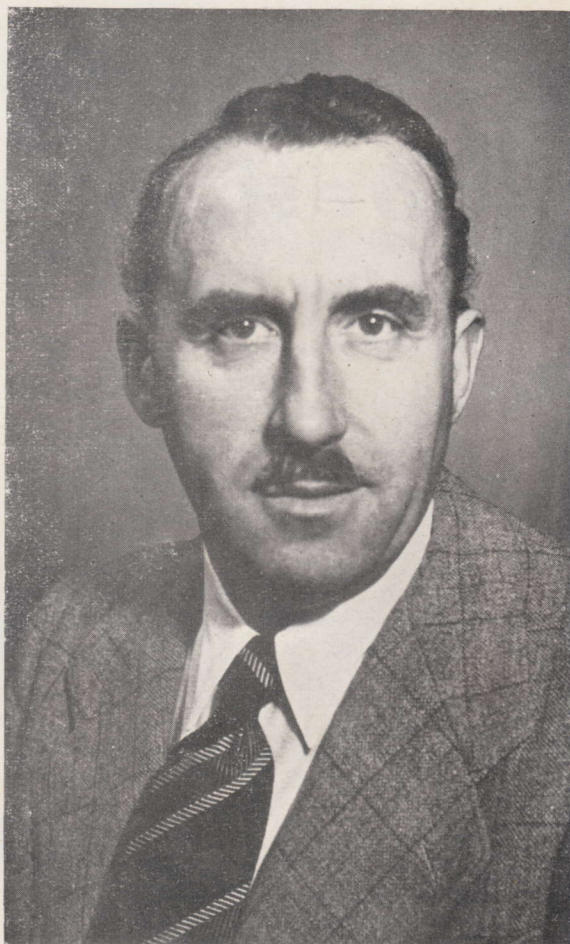
"Was soll hier-dieses Laermen wohl bedeuten—
schnell bekennet was geschah...."

There was roaring laughter, when I rattled off these words of the soldiers in Rossini's "Barber" to the gentlemen of the D.G.O.S. Chorus in our first rehearsal for the performances of the Hamburg State Opera. "We'll never learn that", they said pessimistically. But they had to learn it, and it did not take us very much more than 5 minutes to make it sound as if the singers were born on the banks of the Rhine and not on those of the River Liffey.

Singing a foreign language is easier than reading it. Firstly, one of the most difficult elements of speaking is eliminated, namely, the characteristic cadences. This rising and dropping of the voice cannot be learned through fixed rules, such as grammar or phonetics, but only through experience. A foreigner, no matter how well he masters a language, will be recognised by accentuating here and there a sentence in the manner of his own language. In singing, however one cannot make such mistakes, since the composer has fixed the stress in the music.

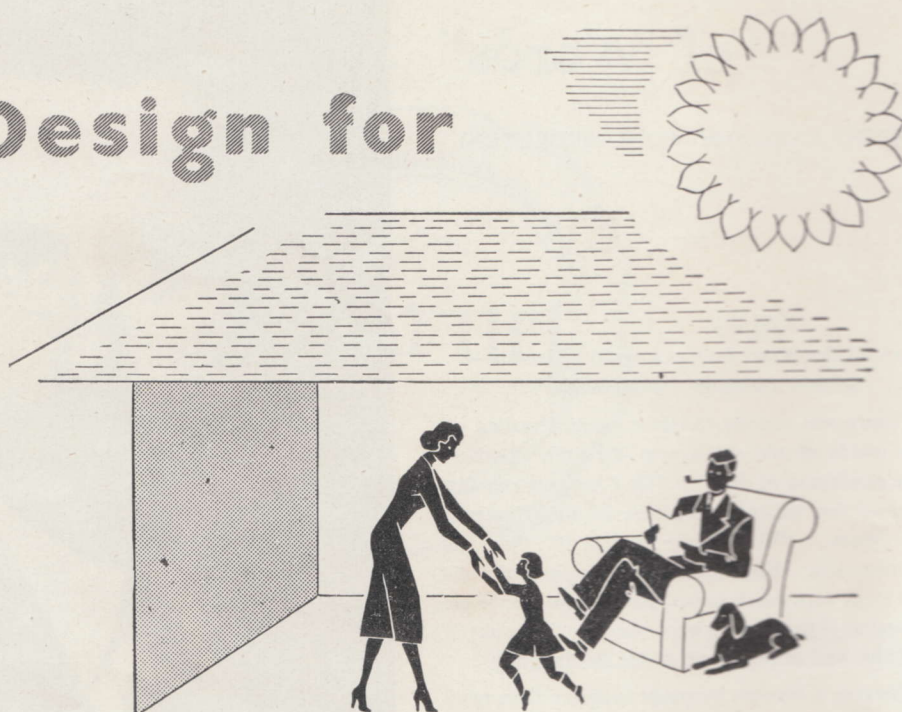
The English language puzzles the continental student by its spelling: one never knows how a letter is pronounced—if at all. The uncomplicated mind of the German race is reflected in their spelling of their own language: There is only one pronunciation for one letter, and none is silent. To make the English language sound well in singing is, admittedly, hard also for the English Speaker. The reason for that, in the first instance is the abundance of consonants. In words as "swift" or "screams", the vowel, which carries the voice, is hopelessly defeated 5 to 1 by its voiceless neighbours. But the main difficulty is to be found in the nature of the English vowels which are mostly compounds; pure, so-called basic vowels are comparatively rare. My pupils from England or America, who came to me in Germany, found it far from easy to produce an "O" without winding it up with an "oo", or an "A" without raising the voice to an "ee". My Dublin students are very much better in that respect, and I think it is the Irish language, which makes the difference. There we have the clean shaped vowels of the continental languages, and we also find such dreaded consonants as the German guttural "ch".

Still, it means hard work to sing in the foreign tongue from memory, and what is more, to make its use so automatic that the singing sounds natural. Patience can produce the amazing result, that the enunciation in the foreign language is clearer than in the singer's own idiom, since he pays more attention to it. But the amount of patience necessary is very great and this patience can come only from enthusiasm. Our chorus, indeed, were not fatigued after the hundredth repetition of a single phrase, and so, I am confident, that these soldiers will win their battle with the German language.



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VERDI'S RIGOLETTO

1851-1951



This year we commemorate the centenary of the first performance of Giuseppe Verdi's opera Rigoletto.

The story of Rigoletto was taken from Victor Hugo's play "Le Roi S'Amuse" which was first performed in Paris in November 1832.

Verdi first saw the play in 1849, he then decided to have a libretto constructed by Piave. With the opera ready Verdi found himself in difficulties with the censor. The charge was that the story was immoral, but this was probably only a pretext, the real cause of the trouble seems to have been the representation of a French monarch in such a guise. For a time it looked as if Verdi would have to give up his plan, however he was very much impressed by the subject, and it is on record that in after years he said that Rigoletto was one of the best libretti that had ever been given to him. He refused to set any other text for the impresario who had commissioned the opera.

Happily a compromise was arrived at, and the difficulty overcome. The action was transferred from Paris to Mantua, and Francis I. became the Duke of Mantua. The names of all the other characters were also changed. This simple solution satisfied all, and the opera Rigoletto was first produced at Venice on March 11th, 1851 and proved an immediate success.

The opera follows closely the prose play, but Verdi and his librettist saw that some of the most effective situations could be touched in with higher lights and deeper shadows, by the means of music. For example only in music can a number of characters all say different things at the same time, with results agreeable to the listener. Seldom has the superiority of the musical over the spoken drama, in certain respects been more conclusively demonstrated than in the quartette in the final act of Verdi's Rigoletto.

After a century Rigoletto finds an honoured place in the repertoire of all the leading opera houses in the world, and it is one of the operas close to the heart of all Dublin operagoers.

For the Dublin centenary performances the Dublin Grand Opera Society has engaged a cast of principals of international repute including—The Duke of Mantua—Walter Midgley; Covent Garden Rigoletto—Tom Williams; Covent Garden Gilda—Rosana Giancola—Rome Opera; Maddelena—Betty Sagon—Carl Rosa Opera Co. The performances will be conducted by the eminent Czech conductor Vilem Tausky and produced by Sydney Russell, late of the British National Opera Co.

From the above it will be seen that the society has spared no effort in order to insure performances worthy of the occasion.

W. O'Kelly,
Chairman D.G.O.S.

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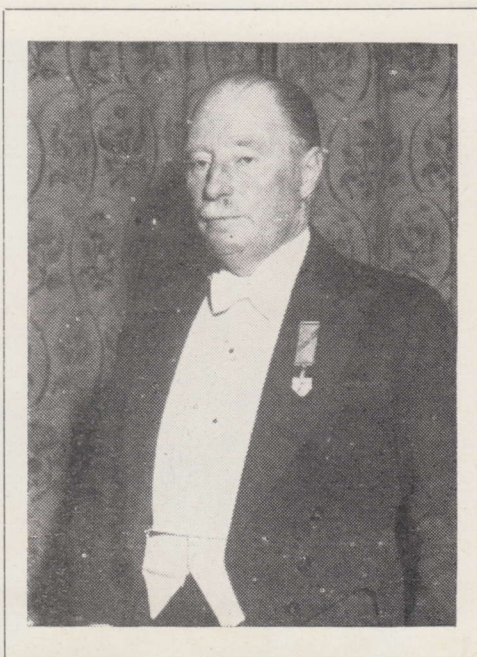
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To the Patron Members of the Dublin Grand Opera Society I have to express my appreciation of all they have done and what they are continuing to do in support of the Society. To many of them I am under a personal debt of gratitude for their encouragement and help to me in the discharge of my duties.

It is with some pride that I am able to say that the Dublin Grand Opera Society is now established as one of the foremost of its kind not only in the Republic of Ireland but in the world. For the furtherance of our objects and the successful continuance of our work we need further and better support financial and moral. All those interested in Grand Opera are invited to become Patron Members so that they may enjoy the privileges attaching to such Membership and that the Society may have the benefit of their patronage.

There have been many complaints from Patron Members and others as to the difficulties of booking and of the lack of accommodation. These are not the fault of the Society. We have at all times been under a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Louis Elliman of the Gaiety Theatre for his support and generous treatment and to his staff at the Theatre. The Gaiety Theatre-grand, intimate, homely place though it may be is unfortunately too small. There is a need and it is a national need for a theatre in Dublin suitable for the production of Opera on the grand scale. It is my desire and my ambition to see built in this City a National Theatre and Opera House with a school of music attached. I do not suggest that this Theatre should be devoted exclusively to the production of Opera. It could and would also be used for concerts and other suitable cultural musical entertainments. This is as I say a national need. Many have been crying out for it for many years but nothing has been done. I have discussed it in many places but without encouragement. The Irish are musical. It is just as important to feed their souls and their minds with good cultural things as it is to feed their bodies with good food. It may be that what I am writing here may come to pass. In many countries some of them smaller than Ireland there are such National Theatres. Why not here?

James J. O'Connor,
Chairman,
Patron Members' Committee,

Applauded

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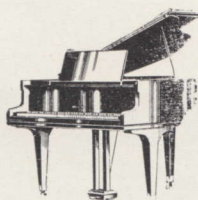
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"RIGOLETTO"

(VERDI)

THE Duke of Mantua is a wild and debauched youth, who is assisted in his dissipated life by Rigoletto, his jester. In the first act, Rigoletto is found helping the Duke to win the wife of the Count Ceprano, but her father, Count Monterone, appears in the midst of a feast and curses both Rigoletto and the Duke.

Rigoletto has one vulnerable point in his armour and that is his tender love for his beautiful and pure daughter Gilda. Unknown to Rigoletto, the Duke has been serenading Gilda, and has won her confidence. One night as Rigoletto goes home he finds some of the Duke's men abducting a young woman. Thinking that it is the Countess Ceprano, he gleefully assists them only to find that it is his own daughter.

Gilda is taken to the Duke's palace, where Rigoletto follows her, but she implores him not to

take vengeance on the Duke, whom she loves. Rigoletto is not to be put off, and hires one Sparafucile to kill the Duke.

In the last act we find Sparafucile's sister, Maddalena, succumbing to the advances of the Duke, and she begs her brother not to kill him. He consents, and they decide to kill the next passer-by instead, and pretend that it is the Duke's body. Rigoletto has persuaded Gilda to fly from the palace disguised as a man, and she is the next passer-by and is killed. Her body is then placed in a sack and handed to the jester as being that of the Duke. As Rigoletto proceeds to the river to dispose of the body he hears the Duke singing, and realises that a mistake has been made. He hastily tears open the sack to find his dying daughter inside, and with a last frenzied cry remembers that Monterone's awful curse has been fulfilled.

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"LA TOSCA"

(PUCCINI)

FLORIA Tosca, singer, and Mario Cavaradossi, painter, love each other. For having helped a political fugitive, Angelotti, Mario falls into the clutches of Baron Scarpia, Chief of Police, who also aspires to Tosca. Tosca, to save Mario from further torture, reveals Angelotti's hiding-place. News is brought of Bonaparte's victory at Marengo a defeat for Scarpia. Mario exults. Scarpia orders his execution. Mario gone, Tosca pretends to yield to Scarpia, who arranges a pretended mock execution. Tosca wins from Scarpia a safe-conduct for Mario and herself. As Scarpia hands her the

paper she stabs him fatally and leaves for Castel Sant' Angelo, where Mario awaits death. Tosca is admitted and instructs Mario how to act during the "mock" execution. But Scarpia has been doubly astute. He had hoped to enjoy Tosca and have his revenge on Mario. He achieves the latter, for the bullets are real. Tosca vainly calls on Mario to rise from a death which she thinks feigned. The murder of Scarpia has been discovered. His agents approach to arrest Tosca. She jumps to death from the castle parapet crying: "Scarpia, we shall meet on high!"

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The late Col. Fritz Brase.

Before my father, the late Col. Fritz Brase, came to Ireland to organise the Irish Army School of Music, he had conducted the Philharmonic Orchestras in Berlin, Danzig, and Riga as guest conductor. He was also interested in Opera as such, especially Wagner, and if the first World War had not ended as it did, he would have taken over the State Opera in Riga.

With that family history I suppose it was only natural that I, too, should take to Opera, if only in the Chorus. The Chorus is just as important as the soloist and, as I have since found out, much more fun. From that position you can witness the whole show without having the gruelling experience of singing by yourself.

When I joined the D.G.O.S. it was with the intention of taking part just for one season. That was four years ago and I am still a member!

It takes very much enthusiasm to sacrifice at least one night a week for rehearsals and every night for the fortnight preceding each season.

Learning the chorus parts is not so simple as it seemed when I saw the Operas from the Audience. There are many exacting pieces, especially in Verdi's Operas, which have to be repeated over and over again; they are often only accompaniments as it were, and are mostly drowned by the soloists! Then there are cues to be learned, many of them "false cues", that is, the cue theme is repeated several times before the Chorus can actually start singing. Sometimes the Chorus takes the cue from the soloist's words instead of the music. What may happen if the soloist uses a different edition of the Opera and consequently sings different words, is not difficult to imagine.

Shortly before the season we have so-called "floor rehearsals". We know the words and music and now learn what to do on the stage and how to act our part. All this goes on to the accompaniment of the piano. My father often used to marvel at the brilliance of the performances, despite the fact that the Chorus heard neither soloists nor orchestra until the actual night of the show.

In Germany the Operas, being State sponsored, are performed all the year round. Consequently the Chorus is on a professional basis and can have most of its rehearsals with soloists and orchestra. Not yet having a permanent Opera House here and the chorus consisting of enthusiastic amateurs only, as yet this is but a dream, though it would be a good thing to rehearse with orchestra and soloists if only once, because there is a vast difference between singing to a piano accompaniment and to a full orchestra—with no time to correct mistakes if they should occur.

The day before each season opens is spent rehearsing on the Gaiety stage. We are at it all day from early afternoon until as late as midnight. In between we have tea and collect our costumes.

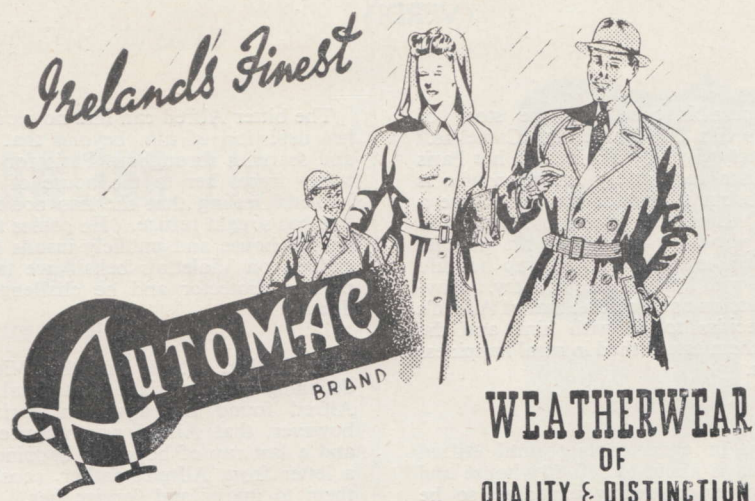
For the newcomer the first night is a big thrill, it was for me anyway. I remember my first night was *Tosca* and, although the chorus was only off-stage, I shall never forget that moment when, standing in the wings, I heard the sinister opening bars as the curtain went up.

It is a great experience, too, to see and hear the great Opera singers so close at hand and to meet them off stage.

There are also many amusing incidents, when, for instance, someone who has been standing in the wings with a cardigan thrown round the shoulders to ward off the ever present draughts, walks on to the stage, forgetting to take it off; or when someone else gets caught in front of the curtain when it comes down, separating him from the others.

Being in the Chorus is hard work? Yes, but much more is it a pleasure. I would not miss it for anything.

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"LA BOHEME"

(PUCCINI)

THE Bohemians are four artistes who live in the picturesque Quartier Latin of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century. They are Rudolph, the poet, Marcel, the painter, Colline, the philosopher, and Schaunard, the musician.

The first act of the opera opens in a bare attic where Marcel and Rudolph are huddled over a stove, trying to get warmth from a small fire they have made with Rudolph's manuscripts. They are soon joined by Colline and Schaunard, who are in a state of great jubilation, having acquired money and food. So with much merriment and laughter they settle down to a feast during which they make their landlord drunk so that he forgets about the rent that is owing to him.

After their meal they decide to go off to a nearby cafe, but as Rudolph has work to do, he promises to join them later. While he works he is interrupted by Mimi, a small flowerseller, whose candle has blown out on the stairs. Rudolph relights the candle for her and then sees how very lovely and how frail she looks. In a scene of great tenderness and beauty he tries to warm her hands which are frozen, and they fall in love with each other.

They must go off to join the others at the Cafe Momus. While they are celebrating at the cafe, Musetta, an old love of Marcel's, comes by with her latest conquest, an old love, Alcindoro. She does her best to make Marcel jealous, and then, sending Alcindoro off on a bogus message, she joins the artistes and they all flee, leaving the bill for Musetta's duped suitor to pay.

The next act is in the snow before a tavern at the toll gate, where Marcel is painting a tavern sign. Rudolph and Mimi have been having many quarrels, and most of them are due to Rudolph's hasty temper. Marcel upbraids Rudolph and tells him to be kinder to her, but Rudolph replies that he thinks he must leave Mimi because she is fatally ill and her strength is being sapped by their continual bickering. Unknown to him Mimi has overheard their conversation and betrays her presence by a fit of coughing; Rudolph is immediately stricken by remorse, and they become reconciled, but decide that they will separate for a time.

In the last act of the opera we are once again transported to the garret, where the friends are assembled, but they are a sadder little group than they were when the opera commenced. However, they keep up a pretence of their old gaiety and stage a burlesque feast. While their noise is at its loudest Musetta and Mimi arrive. Mimi has left her latest lover to come back to spend her last moments with her beloved Rudolph.

In the last two moments they have alone together the two tragic lovers try to recapture some of the early glamour and beauty of their love, and recall the time when Rudolph gently warmed Mimi's hand. Just when they seem at last to be living happily in the past, Mimi dies and leaves the sorrowing Rudolph to face the future alone.

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It is eighty years ago since the foundation stone of the Gaiety was laid, and from the foundation ceremony to its completion and brilliant opening ceremony a bare six months passed and on 27 November 1871 the Gaiety commenced its honourable career.

Grand Opera found a regular place in the theatre's productions and Rose Hersée's English Opera Company gave opera its first performance there. Since then, many first performances and many famous singers have occupied this Gaiety stage.

The Blanche Cole Opera Company followed by the Italian Opera with Bettini and Corrani, preceded the first appearance of the Carl Rosa Opera in 1875 under its founder conductor, Signor Carl Rosa. "I Puritani" was produced with Genieve Ward making her début in the part of Guerabella.

Carl Rosa was firm in his belief that the Dublin music loving public was competent to assess the merit of a work and he submitted with confidence many first productions to them for their judgment. Thus, before 1880, Piccolino by Guirard was presented, but the heavy costs of production caused it to be dropped from the repertoire and it is not now performed. Mignon was given in English for the first time with Julia Gaylord in the title role and Beerbohm Tree performed in Madame Favart, and this period introduced the great Irish bass, Wilhelm Ludwig (William Ledwidge) whose great part was Vanderdetsen in Wagner's "Flying Dutchman."

When in early 1880, the sister theatre, the Theatre Royal was gutted by fire on the morning of a charitable performance causing the death of its manager in the flames, the Gaiety was left to supply the city with its entertainment.

Carl Rosa now produced "I Promessi Sposi" by Ponchielli, "The Cade" by Ambrose Thomas, "Zampa" by Hérold now remembered only by its overture, followed by "Moro" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor".

Within a few years came Beethoven's "Fidelio", Donizetti's "La Favorita", and in 1884 Boito's "Mephistofele" which introduced the Irish tenor Barton McGuckin as Faust, with Ludwig (or Ledwidge) as Mephistopheles and Marie Rose as Marguerite.

Mapleson's Italian Opera Company brought Lillian Nordica and Signor Foli under their conductor Luigi Arditi, no stranger to Dublin for he had composed there in six weeks nearly thirty years earlier, his famous waltz, "Il Barcio" (the Kiss).

The first performance of the "Barber of Seville" given in Dublin was in October 1887 and Verdi's "Ernani" was also on the programme under Arditi, who was presented on the Gaiety stage with an ebony baton, mounted in gold and studded with precious stones. It was sailed down from the Gallery "by a device" to the stage in an ornamental box draped with ribbons in the Italian colours. In his speech of thanks, Arditi is recorded as having said that "his first appearance in England was in the city of Dublin."

Later on, Carl Rosa presented "The Puritan's Daughter", "Robert le Diable", "Cav." and "Pag.", "L'Amico Fritz", "Lohengrin", "The Flying Dutchman", "Tannhauser", "die Meistersinger", "Othello", "Romeo and Juliet", "Lucia di Lammermoor", "Don Giovanni", "Hansel and Gretel", the ever popular "Bohemian Girl" and Rossini's "La Cenerentola".

In November 1893, Sir Augustus Harris's Italian Opera Company produced "Faust", "Orpheus and Eurydice", and amongst others Bizet's "Carmen" in which the part of Don Jose was sung by a young Irish singer with a reputation, Joseph O'Mara, who was later to visit Dublin with his own Company, the O'Mara Opera Company.

The following year saw Barton McGuckin singing Romeo in Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" and he too was to visit Dublin in later years, this time, however, as a conductor in his own and in the first Dublin Opera Company with Flotow's "Martha" and Gounod's "Faust" with J. C. Browner as Mephistopheles, John McCormack as Faust, Stanley Cochrane as Valentine, Mrs. Billy Manahan as Marguerite and Rose McMackin as Siebel. This was in 1908 but I believe the performance was in the re-built Theatre Royal. The Company survived only a couple of years.

During the first quarter of this century opera was presented by Charles Manners and his charming wife Fanny Moody-Manners in the Moody-Manners Company with the Thomas Quinlan, Joseph O'Mara, and Walter McNally Opera Companies and after the death of Carl Rosa, by the re-constituted Carl Rosa Opera under the late H. B. Phillips and his wife.

The first serious attempt to form a resident Irish Opera Society was made in 1928 by Signor Adelio Viani of the Royal Irish Academy of Music and for a decade it presented opera in the Gaiety, first under him as Director-Conductor and later under George Sleator, with success against the competition of visiting Companies. Early in the Second World War this Society left the Gaiety Theatre and it now presents opera in another Dublin theatre.

Over a decade ago, the present writer and Captain (later Commandant) W. O'Kelly of the Irish Army, with Dr. John F. Larchet as its President and Captain (now Lieut-Col.) James M. Doyle as its Musical Director founded the Dublin Grand Opera Society. The repertoire of about 29 operas of the Society is given elsewhere in this brochure and the Gaiety Theatre has always been its headquarters.

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.. Pauline Nolan
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.. Gerard V. Mooney
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The Barber of Seville

ROSSINI

ACT I. Scene 1. Count Almaviva, in love with Dr. Bartolo's ward, Rosina, serenades her beneath her balcony in a street in Seville, and while there, the busybody and jack-of-all-trades Figaro the town barber, arrives and agrees to effect an introduction between them.

Rosina, on the balcony, is flattered by Almaviva's attentions, but is afraid of her guardian, but contrives to drop a letter to the Count asking his name, and goes in.

Figaro suggests that the Count, under the guise of intoxication can gain entrance to the house.

Scene 2. Inside the house, Rosina sings of what she has just heard (*Una voce poco fa*). Her guardian, who wishes to marry her for her property now enters to enlist the help of her music teacher, Basilio who advises spreading a scandal about the Count, whom Bartolo suspects as a rival.

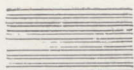
When they go out, Figaro comes in and tells her that her troubadour is Lindoro (not Almaviva) and receives from her a letter for him.

Almaviva (disguised as the drunken Lindoro) staggers in and is eventually arrested for disorderly behaviour by an officer, who, however, releases him on discovering his real rank, and arrests Dr. Bartolo instead.

ACT II. In the music-room in the house. The Count again arrives, this time disguised as the music teacher's assistant, in order to give Rosina her music lesson. Dr. Bartolo, suspicious of him, decides to remain in the room and orders Figaro to shave him there, to watch them. In spite of this, helped by Figaro, Almaviva plots with Rosina (under cover of the music lesson) to elope at midnight. During this, Basilio the real music teacher enters and Figaro and his co-plotters, by pretending that he looks so ill, manage to get rid of him.

When they have gone, Bartolo shows Rosina her letter (which he stole) and pretends it proves that Almaviva is a philanderer. In jealous anger, Rosina agrees to marry her guardian.

The Count and Figaro now return for the elopement and the lovers are reconciled, and are in fact married by the notary which Bartolo had engaged for his own marriage to Rosina. When Bartolo returns, too late, he is mollified by a bribe of Rosina's dowry.



THE HAMBURG



MR. ARTHUR GRUBER

(Music Director, Hamburg State Opera).

Studied under Professor Hermann Abendroth and Professor Walter Braunfels. Musical Director in Frankfurt-on-Main and Opera House, Berlin. Now Chief Musical Director, Hamburg State Opera. Gave concerts in Sweden, Paris with Berlin Opera Orchestra, and in Holland with the Frankfurt Opera House Orchestra. Made numerous Gramophone records.



ANNALIESE ROTHENBERGER

(Rosina and Blonda).

Born in South Germany, she has an extraordinary gift for acting, and has found in Hamburg her personal style and shows great promise for the development of her capabilities.

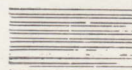


WALTER GEISLER

(Belmonte).

Studied at the Berlin Music High School, and has shown himself to be one of the foremost singers of Mozart.

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Engaged since 1928 in Berlin, Breslau, Braunschweig, Frankfurt-on-Main and Stettin; since 1946 in Hamburg State Opera. Has specialised in effects and furnishings for Opera and Plays, particularly Goethe, Sophocles and Shakespeare. His particular aptitude suits Mozart and the Modern Composers, and has produced with notable success, Ravel's "L'Heure Espagnole".



CLARA EBERS
(Constanza).

Has, after her constant engagements in Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg, completed her studies, starring abroad under Clemens, Krauss, Knappertsbusch, Sabata and Marinuzzi in Genoa, Florence, Barcelona, Bucharest, Athens, Brussels and Lisbon in 1949.

She sang at the International Festival in Aix en Provence the Donna Anna.

HORST GUNTER (Figaro).

As a boy of ten was a member of the Thomas Choir in Leipzig. He was chief singer in the Johann Sebastian Bach Oratorio in the Thomas Choir, specialising in Evangelistic Church Music. Awarded a scholarship to Italy and the Leipzig Conservatoire. 1944—Guest Artist at Berlin State Opera. Mozart's Figaro and Papagena in "The Magic Flute" are his favourite parts.

ADOLF MEYER-BREMEN (Dr. Bartolo).

Sang in Hamburg and in most other German cities as well as in Belgium and Luxembourg. Toured twenty-seven States in America from New York to San Francisco with German Grand Opera under Professor von Schillings and Ernesto Koch.

GUIDO DIEMER (A Notary and Selim Pasha).

1922-25 with State Opera in Munich. 1929 toured Germany and finished at State Theatre in Hamburg. Gave recitals all over Germany before the war.

SIGMUND ROTH (Dom Basilio).

Discovered by Siegfried Wagner and educated by Paul Bender. Starred as serious Bass in Munich, Berlin and Vienna and in other great German towns.

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The Abduction from the Seraglio

(Die Entführung aus dem Serail)

MOZART

- ACT I. Belmonte, a Spanish nobleman, seeking his betrothed Constanza who has been abducted by Selim Pasha, has at last arrived at the square near Selim's palace. If he could also find Pedrillo, his one-time servant who was also captured, and who is now gardener to Selim, his task would be easier. In the square Belmonte meets Osmin, Selim's major-domo whose suspicions he arouses by mentioning Pedrillo. Osmin is madly jealous of Pedrillo over Constanza's maid, Blonda.

When Belmonte leaves, Osmin darkly boasts to Pedrillo who has just entered, of his astuteness and his power, and then leaves.

Belmonte returns and meets Pedrillo, who arranges to present him to the Pasha, his master. Selim Pasha now enters from his palace with his Suite and with Constanza, to whom in vain, he declares a tender love, and Constanza departs. Pedrillo now introduces Belmonte to Selim who welcomes him, Osmin vainly endeavours to prevent the two Spaniards from entering the palace.

- ACT II. Blonda, the maid, singing in the Palace gardens of true love, is interrupted by Osmin, the major-domo who declares himself to her, but is indignantly rejected. Constanza enters and sings of her despair to Blonda and is interrupted by the entry of Selim Pasha who again declares his love for Constanza. She scornfully rejects him.

Meantime Pedrillo tells Blonda that Belmonte is at hand with a scheme to rescue both ladies, who joyfully retire. Pedrillo then proceeds to deaden Osmin's watchfulness by inducing him to drink too much. Finally the lovers re-unite and sing of their love.

- ACT III. The two men now prepare for the rescue, which is proceeding as planned, when Osmin and his men, discovering all, enters and captures them and sends them to Selim Pasha for torture and punishment. He then sings of his triumph.

The lovers prepare for death, but Selim who recognises in Belmonte the son of a former enemy, shows his true nature by magnanimously returning good for evil, and releases the four lovers and forgives them.

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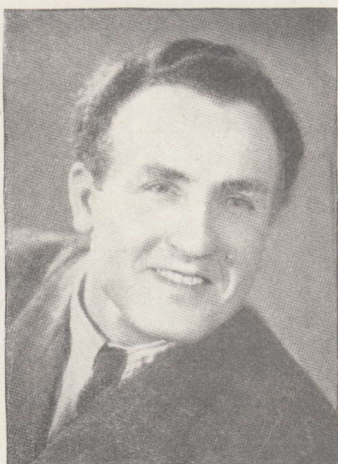
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GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858-1924)

La Bohème—Words by Guiseppe Giacoso and Luigi Illica founded on Henri Murger's book, *LA VIE DE BOHÈME*. First produced, Teatro Reggio, Turin, February 1st 1896.

Tosca—Words by Giacoso and Illica, after the drama by Sardou. First produced, Constanzi Theatre, Rome, January 14th, 1900.

Madame Butterfly—Words by Giacoso and Illica, after the story of John Luther Long and the drama of David Bellasco. First produced, La Scala, Milan, February 17th 1904. Conductor, Campanini

GUISEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

La Traviata—Words by Francesca Maria Piave, after the play *LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS* by Alexandre Dumas, fils. First produced, Fenice Theatre Venice, March 6th, 1853.

Il Trovatore—Words by Salvatore Cammanaro, based on the Spanish drama *THE TROUBADOUR* by Antonio Garcia Gatteerez. First produced, Apollo Theatre, Rome, January 19th, 1853.

Rigoletto—Words by Piave, founded on the play *LE ROI S'AMUSE* by Victor Hugo. First produced, Fenice Theatre, Venice, March 11th, 1851.

Aida—Words by Camille de Locle after a plot by Mariette Bey, the great French Egyptologist. First produced, Cairo, December 24th, 1871.

Othello—Libretto, Arrigo Boito (from Shakespeare's tragedy). First produced, La Scala, Milan, February 5th, 1887.

A Masked Ball—Words by Somma, based on Scribes libretto for Auber's opera, *GUSTAVE III*. First produced, Apollo Theatre, Rome, February 17th, 1859.

Don Carlos—Libretto by Mery and Camille De Locle from *SCHILLERS TRAGEDY*. First produced, Grand Opera, Paris, March 11th, 1867.

CHARLES GOUNOD (1818-1893)

Faust—Words by Jules Barbier and Michael Carré after Goethe's *FAUST*. First produced, Theatre Lyrique, Paris, March 19th, 1859.

Romeo and Juliet—Book by Barbier and Carré after the play by Shakespeare. First produced, at the Theatre Lyrique, Paris, April 27th, 1867.

GEORGES BIZET (1838-1875)

Carmen—Words by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, founded on Prosper Mérimée's novel. First produced, Opera Comique, Paris, March 3rd, 1875.

SAINT SAENS (1835-1921)

Samson and Delilah—Words by Ferdinand Lemaire. First produced, Weimar, Dec. 2nd, 1877.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

The Marriage of Figaro—Words by Lorenzo da Ponte, after Beaumarchais. First produced, National Theatre, Vienna, May 1st, 1786, the composer conducting.

Don Giovanni—Words by da Ponte. First produced, Prague, October 29th, 1787.

Il Seraglio—Book by Bretzner. First produced, July 16th, 1782.

GIOACHINO ANTONI A ROSSINI (1792-1868)

The Barber of Seville—Text by Cesare Sterbini, founded on Beaumarchais. First produced, Argentina Theatre, Rome, February 5th, 1816.

PIETRO MASCAGNI (Born 1863)

Cavalleria Rusticana—Words by Giovanni Targioni-Toggette and G. Menasci, founded on a story by Giovanni Verga. First produced, Constanzi Theatre, Rome, May 17th, 1890.

RUGGIERO LEONCAVALLO (1858-1919)

Pagliacci—Words by the composer. First performance, Teatro del Verme, Milan, May 17th, 1892.

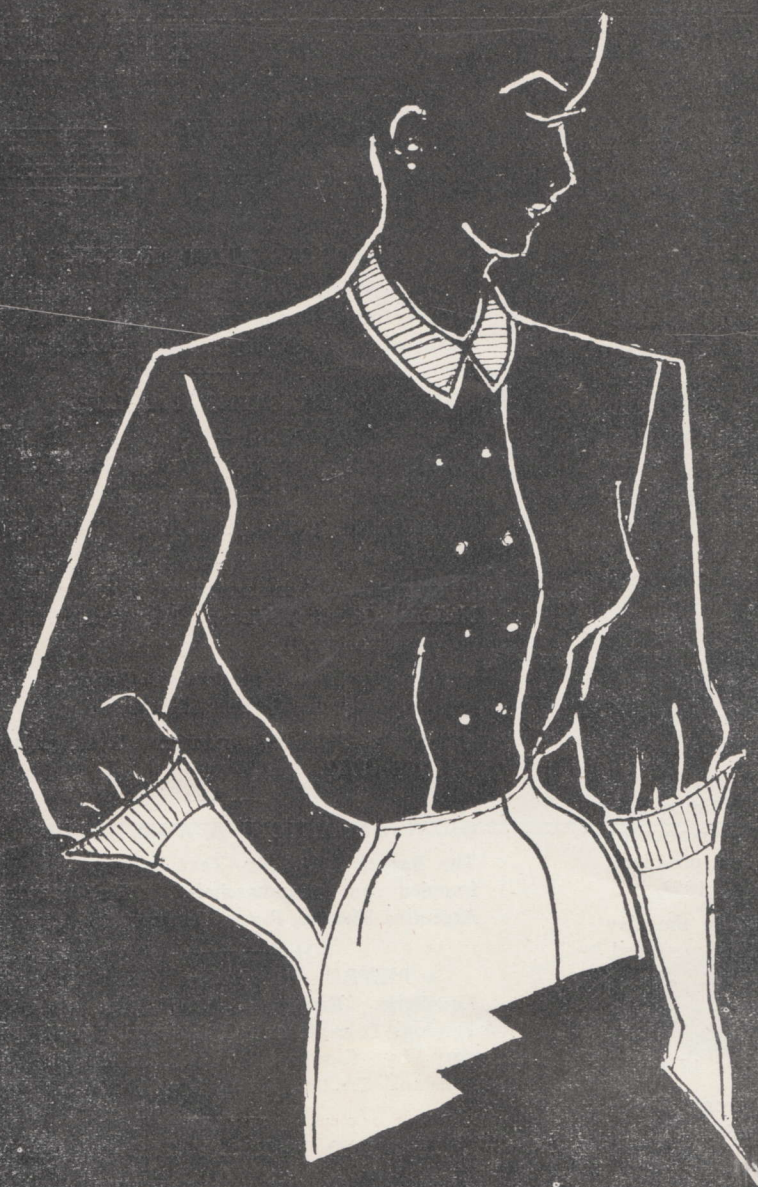
RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)

Tannhäuser—Words by the composer. First produced, Royal Opera, Dresden, October 19th, 1845.

The Flying Dutchman—Book by the composer, after Heine's version of the Legend. First produced at Dresden, January 2nd, 1843.

GAETANO DONIZETTI (1797-1848)

La Favorita—Words by Alphonse Royer and Gustave Waez, adapted from the drama *LE COMTE DE COMMINGES* of Baculard-Darnaud. First produced, Grand Opera, Paris, December 2nd, 1840.



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WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED (contd.)

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK (1854-1921)

Hansel and Gretel—Book by Adelheid Wette.
First produced at Weimar, December 23rd, 1893.

— — —

MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE (1808-1870)

The Bohemian Girl—Libretto adapted by Alfred Bunn from a ballet THE GIPSY, by Fanny Elssler. First produced, Drury Lane, London, November 27th, 1843. Balfe was born in Dublin and after a highly successful career throughout Europe, both as singer and composer, died on his estate in Hertfordshire.

— — —

JACQUES OFFENBACH (1819-1880)

The Tales of Hoffmann—Words by Carré and Barbier, after three tales by the German author Eta Hoffman. First produced at the Opera Comique, Paris, February 10th, 1881.

AMILCARE PONCHIELLI (1834-1886)

La Gioconda—Book by Tobia Garrio, after Victor Hugo's tragedy, "ANGELO THE TYRANT OF PADUA". First produced, La Scala, Milan, April 8th, 1876.

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CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

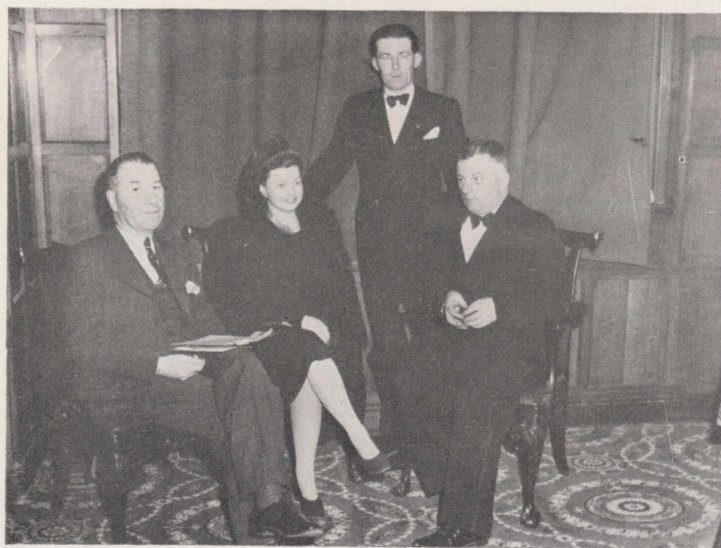
Pelléas and Mélisande—Performed by a caste from the Opera Comique, Paris in May 1948. Book by Maurice Materlinck. First produced, Opera Comique, Paris, April 30th, 1902.

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The Messiah—Composed in 1741 in three weeks. First performed, Fishamble Street, Dublin, April 13th, 1742.



Left to right (seated): Mr. M. Dinnigan (Vice-Chairman, D.G.O.S.), Miss Dora Lindegren (Swedish Soprano) and Commandant W. O'Kelly (Chairman, D.G.O.S.). Standing is Mr. Liam Thompson.

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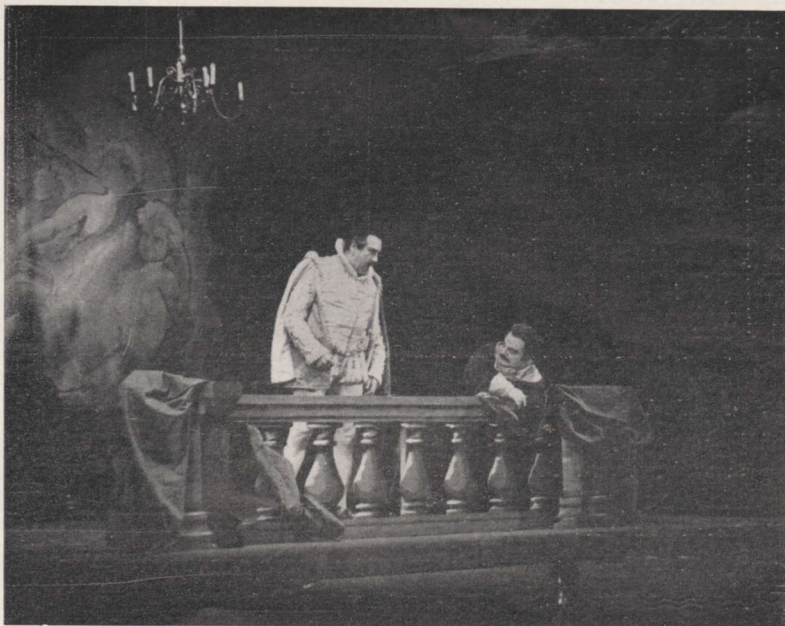
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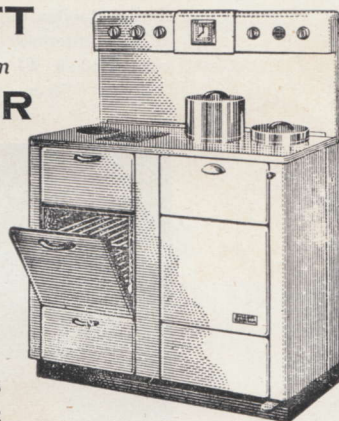
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Sixteen Years at the Gaiety

by Sydney Russell

For the past sixteen years, it has been my privilege to act as operatic producer at all the seasons of opera given in the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, with the exception of the two seasons given by the Dublin Grand Opera Society in 1941. In that period of time there have been, of course, many changes and improvements.

In the Season of 1935 given at Easter time, for example, there was but one visiting artist, the tenor Heddle Nash, who appeared four times in the week as Faust. Mephistopheles on that occasion and on many times subsequently was the late J. C. Browner who had made this role his own. In fact, Lady Harty, a very fine Prima Donna herself, told me that she considered him one of the best Mephistos she had ever heard.

My own experiences date back much further than I care to think about. I was in the cast, in the very small part of Parpignol in *La Boheme* in Cincinnati, Ohio, when the great diva, Melba saw this opera for the first time. The Company touring this opera was a small Italian organization, mainly notable for introducing the then unknown composer, Puccini to English speaking people. It was called the Delconte Opera Co.

When in 1922, I sang with Melba in Covent Garden, I reminded her of this. She was most interested, and some day later, in the foyer of that theatre, insisted on meeting my wife and my mother, telling the latter that she hoped she was proud of me, as she ought to be.

My mother smiled, and said she supposed she was.

Ever since 1930, however, I have been connected with the stage direction, mainly of opera.

I think that every producer, particularly of opera, when he first assumes charge, decides that it is necessary to make some changes in the traditional "business" and mise-en-scene, if only to express his own individuality and leave something new for people to talk about. As my first job as producer was with the Leeds Art Theatre, this did not apply, as we only did plays; but after two years in Leeds, I was offered and accepted the post of Stage Director (which included all productions) at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells Companies.

This is now, the well known Sadler's Wells Company which is famous the world over.

With regard to changes in the traditional business, I very soon decided that unless one was sure that the change was a good one and a definite improvement on the old, it was much wiser to leave well enough alone. Not that there were not hundreds of places in the regular repertoire, where such changes were not only improvements but were really necessary. I do not propose to quote instances but the following anecdote will show how tradition, without any sense or reason, may creep into an opera.

In the celebrated Nile scene in Verdi's *Aida*, there was a spot where the tenor invariably left the stage, leaving the Soprano to keep the duet (an operatic conversation) going, entirely alone. A certain Tenor, new to the part, instead of merely doing as he was told to do at this particular spot, asked "why?". The Stage Manager didn't know, the Conductor didn't know, and the "Aida" didn't know, so the tenor kicked over the traces, and refused to do a



thing which appeared to him senseless. Eventually it was discovered that a great tenor (who shall be nameless) felt the need of a tonic always about then, and had instructed his dresser to be in the wings with a glass of wine, at that place in the musical score.

On the whole, however, I am in favour of sticking to tradition whenever it is reasonable or practical.

Since 1942, I have been with the Dublin Grand Opera Society, and it has been a most happy relationship and responsible for many friendships. Going back further, I recall with pleasure working with many artists who have since made a name not only here but on the other side, notably May Devitt, Patricia Black and John Lynskey while James Johnston, John Torney and others have all been in the front rank over yonder.

Of course the Dublin Grand Opera Society have great cause for congratulation in that they have three devoted servants in the persons of Dr. John F. Larchet, their President; Comdt. O'Kelly whose position of Chairman of the Committee is a euphemism for Managing Director and Lieut-Col. Doyle their Musical Director.

I am delighted to be associated again with Powell-Lloyd a man of great talent who was with me in my own days at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells and for whom I always prophesied a great future. It is nice to see ones prophecies being verified so definitely.

I should leave this article incomplete if I did not say a word or two of the Summer Season of plays which, in conjunction with the Gaiety Theatre, I managed and produced in 1938.

The Season opened with Diana Wynyard in "Sweet Aloes" and continued for six weeks. During that time we presented in addition Marie Ney in "Love from a Stranger" and the only performance which I have heard in Ireland of George Bernard Shaw's "The Millionairess", Margaretta Scott in "The Queen was in the Parlour" (Noel Coward), "She passed through Lorraine" (Lionel Hall) and ending with Gwen ffrrangton-Davies in Ibsen's "Doll's House", The supporting Company was part English and part Irish.

In conclusion a word of appreciation for the steady co-operation of the Gaiety Staff at all times and in every way, from Managing Director to Call Boy.

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Cultural Relations Through Music

by J. J. O'CONNOR

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One of the functions of a Government is to preserve peace and to establish and maintain peace not only in the country governed but in the relations of that country with other nations. In the Republic of Ireland there exists the Cultural Relations Committee of the Department of External Affairs, a Committee set up to encourage and foster happy relationships between this and other countries through music, the arts and other cultural activities. Through the good offices and with the financial aid of the Cultural Relations Committee the Dublin Grand Opera Society was enabled to bring to Dublin last year the Hamburg State Opera an event unparalleled in the musical history of Ireland. Through the same good offices and with the same aid the Hamburg State Opera is in Dublin again to the delight of the audiences at the Gaiety Theatre. It is but right that the Dublin Grand Opera Society should express to the Minister for External Affairs and the Members of the Cultural Relations Committee its very deep sense of appreciation of what has been done.

The Members of the Opera Comique from Paris have also visited the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin as the guests of the Society and from many of the world's countries have come Guest Artistes of international reputation.

May all this good work long continue and may it always have the official sanction, aid and encouragement of the Government.

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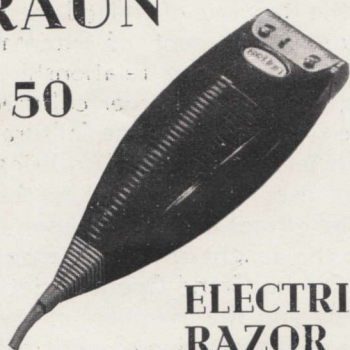
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For Music's Sake

Visitors to the city understandably are surprised to learn that Dublin possesses no building which is designed primarily for the presentation of musical performances, from grand opera to symphony concerts. There is little doubt that a hall or theatre for these purposes would fulfil a genuine requirement of the city's artistic life. It is true that distinguished conductors such as Mr. John Barbirolli and Sir Thomas Beecham have visited Dublin with their orchestras, and have performed in a local theatre; but their surroundings were not designed for symphony concerts, and the results were not so satisfactory as they would have been in a concert hall or opera house *pur sang*. Similarly, those companies which provide an annual diet of grand opera would be better served by a theatre built solely for the sake of music. There is no apparent reason why a building should not be constructed to house conveniently every possible kind of musical performance. The present guest-conductor of the Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Sixten Eckerberg has revealed that the city of Gothenburg, with a substantially smaller population than Dublin, has an admirable concert hall which can accommodate 1,400 people. The money was provided by an alliance of a municipal grant and a State subsidy. Is there any reason why

some such plan should not be possible in Dublin? At the moment some interested persons are endeavouring to stimulate support for a scheme to build a national theatre and opera house, together with an adjoining school of music, to encourage and instruct Irish talent. It is to be hoped that these aspirations will be realised before much more time has passed. Ireland cannot substantiate, with any comfort, her reputation as a music-loving country so long as she lacks a temple in which she can pay homage to Euterpe, and to Terpsichore, who is the muse of choral song as well as of the dance. The Government would do well to lend more than an ear to the project; for, even in this mercantile age, prestige is more than a matter of dollars or pounds. Apart from the musical delights which the scheme would provide for regular and larger audiences, the gain in musical education would be considerable. Music has been treated with harsh neglect in this country. Since the end of the war, however, there have been signs of an earnest desire—particularly on the part of Radio Eireann—to raise the standard of performance and appreciation. A good national concert hall would do much to help Ireland to polish her tarnished reputation with regard to music. The "makeshift" policy which has prevailed hitherto is not to the country's credit.

(Reprinted from *The Irish Times*, Jan. 8th, 1949).

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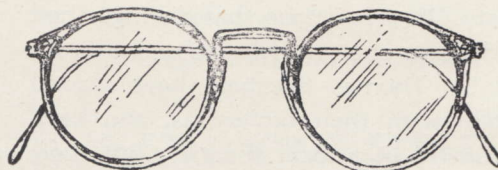
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THE DEATH OF VERDI *and* THE CENTENARY of RIGOLETTO

by John E. Doyle.

On the 27th of January 1901 at ten minutes to three in the morning Verdi died at the Hotel di Milano, where for some years he had spent the greater part of his winters. He lay silent for a week before death. Amongst the watchers at his bedside were Puccini's librettist, Giacosa and the distinguished poet composer, Boito, Verdi's librettist for **Otello** and **Falstaff**. In 1896 Verdi had founded in Milan a home for one hundred aged musicians, sixty men and forty women. To this home he left one half of his estate, together with all future royalties on his operas. I can find no written testimony to the report that the last music which Verdi heard, was the chorus 'Go, thought on golden wings' from **Nabucco**, played in the death chamber by a group of instrumentalists specially assembled.

One wonders if, during those last seven days, when he did not speak, Verdi were capable of thought. If so, perhaps his memory went back to Venice to the Fenice Theatre on the night of 11th March 1851, when, after vicissitudes that would have easily discouraged a less iron character than Verdi, **Rigoletto** had its triumphant premiere. At that time Venice and Lombardy were under the heel of Austria. The Austrian Censorship wielded strict supervision on drama and opera and permitted nothing that might slight royalty. The censors disputed almost every word of the text of

Rigoletto. The libretto was most skilfully based by the irrepressible Piave on Victor Hugo's effective play **Le Roi S'amuse**. The King in question was Francis I. of France. The chief Austrian complaint was that the opera would present a King in an unfavourable moral light. Verdi and Piave had the courage to yield to the absurd Austrian suggestion that the French characters of the play should become Italians. Thus Francis I. of France became the Duke of Mantua.

At the outset of its career, the opera was successively called **Rigoletto**, **The Curse**, **Viscardello** and finally a permanent return to **Rigoletto**. The work had its English premiere in London on 14th May 1853. It was roundly condemned by the two leading London critics of the day. Chorley of **The Athenaeum** described the famous scene of Act II between Rigoletto and the courtiers and the whole of the last Act as 'miserable in their patchiness and want of meaning'. Davison of **The Times** complained peevishly in his summing-up: 'In short, with one exception (**Luisa Miller**), **Rigoletto** is the most feeble opera of Signor Verdi's with which we have the advantage to be acquainted'.

Of Verdi's twenty-six operas, **Rigoletto** is the fifteenth and the first of that remarkable centre trio of which the other two are **Il Trovatore** (January 1853) and **La Traviata** (March 1853). It seems undoubted that **Rigoletto** is the first of his operas in which Verdi gives to each personage a characteristic vocal line.

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THE DEATH OF VERDI and THE CENTENARY OF RIGOLETTO (contd.)

This feature is not found in **Il Trovatore** but is brilliantly developed in **La Traviata**. For the student of artistic creative powers, **Rigoletto** is confounding. According to the book, **Il Trovatore** should have come first. Accepted tenets aside, these three operas have had and have a permanent place in the world repertoire. Even at the not very Verdian Paris Opera, **Rigoletto** occurs every year. On the 17th of August 1949 I heard the 850th performance of the opera at that house. To my fury, there were several cuts, all unjustifiable, like many of those which are imposed on the Dublin public.

An opera which has had an uninterrupted career of a century can reasonably be called immortal. Uncountable are the sopranos, tenors, baritones, basses and contraltos, who have made their debut in **Rigoletto**. Of the opera, Rossini said 'In this music I at last recognise Verdi's genius'. Francis Hoyer, the distinguished English biographer of Verdi, states '**Rigoletto**, though it contains several weak passages, attains a force of dramatic sincerity and expression that could scarcely be improved upon'. Victor Hugo, who was at first opposed to the work, later became its fervent admirer. In fact he admitted that the Sparafucile-Rigoletto duet in Act I. Scene 2 and the quartet in the last Act are improvements on his own play.

Verdi has always had fierce assailants, who, in my experience, are strangely silent on **Rigoletto**. There are those who condemn the opera because they consider **La Donna e mobile** a facile melody, which has become hackneyed. To take **La Donna** from its setting is like quoting an important statement out of its context. Despite all opposition, **Rigoletto** goes smiling on its way, if one can apply 'smiling' to so swiftly tragic a plot. Mozartians, Wagnerians, Puccinites, Richard Straussists may hold back or seek to destroy but, to mention four places of my experience, there is always a crowded public for **Rigoletto** in Paris, London, Verona, Dublin. Verdi's own opinion, which he expressed after the Venice premiere to the baritone, Varesi, who had created the role of Rigoletto, was that he did not think that he would ever compose anything better. Two years later, that is, after **Il Trovatore** and **La Traviata**, Verdi reaffirmed his earlier judgment, writing that, because of its strong contrasts, he considered **Rigoletto** the best of his (seventeen) operas. Alas! there is no record to tell us what his opinion was after **Aida**, **Otello**, **Falstaff**, but hundreds of thousands of opera-goers agree with Verdi that **Rigoletto**, if not the best, is at least one of the best of the master's works.

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Dublin is an opera loving city. One has only to look at the long queues waiting patiently for hours to obtain tickets for the opera season to verify this statement. During a performance, one can sense the excitement and enthusiasm shared not only by the audience but by the Performing Members of the Society itself. On a few occasions some of the Guest Artistes from the Continent have commented to me on this—and added that they had never experienced such enthusiasm in any other City in Europe. What a pity then that opera goers do not endeavour to obtain the maximum amount of enjoyment from an opera studying its nature, origin and development. To illustrate my point, the opera “Pelleas et Melisande”, which, incidentally, was performed in Dublin in 1948 by the Opera Comique, Paris, on the invitation of the Dublin Grand Opera Society, is a work which, in order to be appreciated properly, demands a study of Debussy, the period in which he lived; his aims and ideals; his association with the Impressionist Painters and Symbolist Poets and their influence on his work etc. In the case of Wagnerian Opera, or as the Composer termed it, “Music-drama”, it is imperative to study the reforms and innovations of this Romantic Composer, in order to understand the change in style from the early Wagner to the mature Wagner; his development of the Leitmotif system and his recognition of the enormous power of the orchestra to intensify the drama.

It has been observed that the operas which are a success financially, are the better known operas like “Faust”, “La Boheme”, “Carmen”, and “La Traviata”; whereas operas not so well known, such as Verdi’s masterpiece, “Othello”, though artistically a great success, proved a failure financially.

Much time, energy and money are spent by the Society in presenting to the Public an opportunity of hearing such works as “Samson and Delilah”, “The Flying Dutchman”, “A Masked Ball” etc. which are seldom seen today. It is up to the Public then to show their appreciation of the Society’s efforts on their behalf, by attending these operas and profiting therefrom.

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